

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 OPIC-03 AF-06 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 AGR-05 AID-05 IO-11

OES-03 DHA-02 CU-02 HEW-02 SCCT-01 EURE-00 OMB-01

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P R 061737Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5940

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 0857

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: AZORES

REFS: (A) LISBON 248 (DTG 131636Z JAN 76), (B) LISBON 0599
(DTG 281338Z JAN 76)

SUMMARY: RECENT REMARKS BY AZORES JUNTA PRESIDENT ALTINO DE
MAGALHAES DEMONSTRATED BOTH HIS UNDERSTANDING OF ISLANDS AND HIS
LOYALTY TO PORTUGAL. END SUMMARY.

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1. IN PONTA DELGADA INTERVIEW PUBLISHED FEB 5 IN LISBON INDE-

PENDENT CENTER-LEFT DAILY "A CAPITAL," PRESIDENT OF AZORES REGIONAL JUNTA AND MILITARY GOVERNOR GEN ALTINO DE MAGALHAES DISCUSSED CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN AZORES. MAJOR POINTS INCLUDED:

-- LAJES NEGOTIATIONS: QUERIED ON RECENT COMMENTS BY SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY (REF A) ON NEGOTIATIONS FOR USG USE OF LAJES FACILITIES, MAGALHAES STATED THAT, ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT OFFICIALLY AWARE OF SENATORS REMARKS, HE FELT STRONGLY THAT PROCEEDS OF BASE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BENEFIT AZORES.

-- AZOREAN LIBERATION FRONT (FLA): MAGALHAES REFUSED TO COMMENT ON ACTIVITIES OF FLA SINCE ABORTIVE NOV 25 COUP. WHEN PRESSED BY INTERVIEWER, WHO REMINDED HIM THAT AZOREAN CDS HAD RECENTLY BEEN POLLING AZOREANS ON PREFERENCES BETWEEN AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE, MAGALHAES AGAIN DUCKED QUESTION, AWAITING CDS ACTIVITY WAS POLITICAL MATTER IN WHICH HE DID NOT INTEND TO INTERFERE. MAGALHAES DID EXPRESS REGRET THAT SOME AZOREANS STILL ADVOCATED "INTIMIDATION AND VIOLENCE"; HE AFFIRMED SUCH TACTICS WOULD BE OPPOSED.

-- SELF-RULE: MAGALHAES STRESSED THAT, WITH CREATION OF REGIONAL JUNTA AND RECENT GOP APPROVAL OF DECREE-LAW ON AUTONOMY, AZOREANS ENJOYED FOR FIRST TIME EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER ARCHIPELAGO'S GOVERNMENT. HE NOTED THAT CONTROL WOULD BE WIDENED BY APPROVAL OF STATUTE ON AZOREAN AUTONOMY, CURRENTLY BEING DRAFTED, WHICH PROVIDED FOR DIRECT ELECTION OF REGIONAL ASSEMBLY.

-- RELATIONS WITH CONTINENT: MAGALHAES DENIED IN STRONG TERMS INTERVIEWERS'S SUGGESTION THAT AZORES WERE VICTIM OF PAST OR CURRENT PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM. EMPHASIZING PAST CULTURAL AND SOCIAL TIES BETWEEN TWO AREAS, MAGALHAES POINTED TO RECENT CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ACTION TO DEVELOP AZOREAN CATTLE AND DAIRY INDUSTRY AND GEOTHERMAL POTENTIAL, AS WELL AS ITS CREATION OF AZOREAN UNIVERSITY, AS EVIDENCE OF GOP GOOD FAITH TOWARDS AZORES. "I RESENT IT," HE SAID, "WHEN PEOPLE WHO YESTERDAY AFFIRMED THEIR GREAT LOVE FOR PORTUGAL TODAY SPEAK OF COLONIALISM HERE IN THE AZORES."

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2. GALVAO DE MELO RETURNS: POTENTIAL CDS PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDER GALVAO DE MELO RETURNED FEB 5 FROM ONE WEEK VISIT TO AZORES. IN ARRIVAL REMARKS HE SAID AZOREANS PREFER AUTONOMY TO "COMPLETE SEPARATION" NOW THAT THERE WAS "INTELLIGENT" LEADERSHIP IN LISBON WHICH UNDERSTOOD AZOREAN PROBLEMS. HE DENIED HAVING CONTACTS WITH FLA DURING STAY IN AZORES, BUT SAID HE HAD NOTED SUPPORT IN SOME QUARTERS FOR INDEPENDENCE. HE ATTRIBUTED SEPARATIST SENTIMENT TO AZOREAN FRUSTRATION OVER "UNFULFILLED

PROMISES."

3. COMMENT: GEN. MAGALHAES'S COMMENTS DEMONSTRATE BOTH HIS SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING OF AZOREAN REALITIES AS WELL AS HIS ESSENTIAL LOYALTY TO PORTUGAL. IT IS THESE QUALITIES WHICH HAVE ALLOWED HIM TO RETAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF BOTH THE AZOREANS AND HIS SUPERIORS OVER THE PAST YEAR, AND WHICH HAVE MADE HIM SUCH AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE OF AZOREAN INTERESTS IN LISBON. HIS DETERMINED REPRESENTATION OF AZOREAN VIEWPOINTS HAS BEEN A PRIME FACTOR IN THE GOP'S REALIZATION OF THE NEED TO SATISFY LONG-STANDING AZOREAN COMPLAINTS. CARLUCCI

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, JUNTA, PRESS CONFERENCES, SELFGOVERNMENT, AZORES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LISBON00857
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760046-0478
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760275/aaaacnqd.tel
Line Count: 126
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LISBON 248, 76 LISBON 599
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 FEB 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 FEB 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <11 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AZORES
TAGS: PINT, PO, (DE MAGALHAES, ALTINO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006